

Western Ballet Absolute Beginners Class Outline

I. Exercises at the Barre

A. Demi Plie

[*duh-MEE-plee-AY*]

Half-bend of the knees. All steps of elevation begin and end with a demi-plié.

B. Battement Tendu

[*bat-MAHN tahn-DEW*]

Battement stretched. A battement tendu is the commencing portion and ending portion of a grand battement and is an exercise to force the insteps well outward. The working foot slides from the first or fifth position to the second or fourth position without lifting the toe from the ground. Both knees must be kept straight. When the foot reaches the position *pointe tendue*, it then returns to the first or fifth position. Battements tendus may also be done with a demi-plié in the first or fifth position. They should be practiced en croix.

C. Battement Degage

[*bat-MAHN day-ga-ZHAY*]

Disengaged battement. A term of the Cecchetti method. The battement dégagé is similar to the battement tendu but is done at twice the speed and the working foot rises about four inches from the floor with a well-pointed toe, then slides back into the first or fifth position. Battements dégagés strengthen the toes, develop the instep and improve the flexibility of the ankle joint. Same as battement tendu jeté (Russian School), battement glissé (French School).

D. Rond de Jambe

[*rawn duh zhahnb*]

Round of the leg, that is, a circular movement of the leg. Ronds de jambe are used as an exercise at the bar, in the centre and in the adage, and are done à terre or en l'air. When used as a step, ronds de jambe are done en l'air and may be sauté or relevé. All are done clockwise (en dehors) and counterclockwise (en dedans).

E. Fondue

[*fawn-DEW*]

Sinking down. A term used to describe a lowering of the body made by bending the knee of the supporting leg. Saint-Léon wrote, "Fondu is on one leg what a plié is on two." In some instances the term fondu is also used to describe the ending of a step when the working leg is placed on the ground with a soft and gradual movement.

F. Battement Frappe

[bat-MAHN fra-PAY]

Struck **battement**. An exercise in which the dancer forcefully extends the working leg from a **cou-de-pied position** to the front, side or back. This exercise strengthens the toes and insteps and develops the power of **elevation**. It is the basis of the **allegro** step, the **jeté**.

G. Adage

[French: a-DAHZH]

Adage is a French word derived from the Italian *adagio*, meaning at ease or leisure. English ballet teachers use "adage," the French adaptation, while Americans prefer the original Italian. In dancing it has two meanings: (1) A series of exercises, consisting of a succession of slow and graceful movements which may be simple or of the most complex character, performed with fluidity and apparent ease.

H. Grande Battement

[grahn bat-MAHN]

Large **battement**. An exercise in which the **working leg** is raised from the hip into the air and brought down again, the accent being on the downward movement, both knees straight. This must be done with apparent ease, the rest of the body remaining quiet. The function of grands battements is to loosen the hip joints and turn out the legs from the hips. Grands battements can be taken devant, derrière and à la seconde.

I. Petite Battement

[puh-TEE bat-MAHN sewr luh koo-duh-PYAY]

Small **battement** on the ankle. This is an exercise at the bar in which the working foot is held **sur le cou-de-pied** and the lower part of the leg moves out and in, changing the foot from sur le cou-de-pied devant to sur le cou-de-pied derrière and vice versa. Petits battements are executed with the supporting foot **à terre**, **sur la demi-pointe** or **sur la pointe**.

Petite battement can also be done with coupe front or back, pointed or flexed

II. Center Exercises

A. Port de Bras

[*pawr duh brah*]

Carriage of the arms. The term port de bras has two meanings: (1) A movement or series of movements made by passing the arm or arms through various positions. The passage of the arms from one position to another constitutes a port de bras. (2) A term for a group of exercises designed to make the arms move gracefully and harmoniously

B. Pas de Bouree

[*pah duh boo-RAY*]

Bourrée step. Pas de bourrée is done dessous, dessus, devant, derrière, en avant, en arrière and en tournant, en dedans and en dehors, on the point or demi-pointe.

[*duh-SOO*]

Under. Indicates that the working foot passes behind the supporting foot. As, for example, in pas de bourrée dessous.

C. Temps Lie

[*tahn Iyay*]

Transfer of weight from one leg to the other.

D. Pas de Valse

[*pah duh valss*]

Waltz step. Done with a graceful swaying of the body with various arm movements. May be done facing or en tournant. The step is like a balancé, but the feet do not cross.

E. Balance

[*ba-lahn-SAY*]

Rocking step. This step is very much like a pas de valse and is an alternation of balance, shifting the weight from one foot to the other. Balancé may be done crossing the foot either front or back. Fifth position R foot front. Demi-plié, dégagé the R foot to the second position and jump on it lightly in demi-plié, crossing the L foot behind the R ankle and inclining the head and body to the right. Step on the L demi-pointe behind the R foot, slightly lifting the R foot off the ground; then fall on the R foot again in demi-plié with the L foot raised sur le cou-de-pied derrière. The next balancé will be to the left side. Balancé may also be done en avant or en arrière facing croisé or effacé and en tournant.

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F. Chainé

[*sheh-NAY*]

Chains, links. This is an abbreviation of the term "tours chaînés déboulés": a series of rapid turns on the points or demi-pointes done in a straight line or in a circle.

G. Ballet Walk

H. Small Jumps

Jumps can be done in 1st Position, 2nd Position, 5th Position, and Echappe.

[*ay-sha-PAY*]

Escaping or slipping movement. An *échappé* is a level opening of both feet from a closed to an open position. There are two kinds of *échappés*: *échappé sauté*, which is done with a spring from the fifth position and finishes in a *demi-plié* in the open position, and *échappé sur les pointes*, or demi-pointes, which is done with a *relevé* and has straight knees when in the open position. In each case *échappés* are done to the second or fourth position, both feet traveling an equal distance from the original center of gravity.

I. Assemble

[*a-sahn-BLAY*]

Assembled or joined together. A step in which the working foot slides well along the ground before being swept into the air. As the foot goes into the air the dancer pushes off the floor with the *supporting leg*, extending the toes. Both legs come to the ground simultaneously in the fifth position. If an *assemblé* is *porté* it requires a preparatory step such as a *glissade* to precede it. If an *assemblé* is *en tournant* it must be preceded by a preparatory step. *Assemblés* are done *petit* or *grand* according to the height of the *battement* and are executed *dessus*, *dessous*, *devant*, *derrière*, *en avant*, *en arrière* and *en tournant*. They may be done *en face*, *croisé*, *effacé* or *écarté*. *Assemblé* may also be done with a beat for greater brilliance. In the Cecchetti *assemblé* both knees are bent and drawn up after the *battement* so that the flat of the toes of both feet meet while the body is in the air.

J. Glissade

[*glee-SAD*]

Glide. A traveling step executed by gliding the working foot from the fifth position in the required direction, the other foot closing to it. *Glissade* is *a terre* à terre step and is used to link other steps. After a *demi-plié* in the fifth position the working foot glides along the floor to a strong point a few inches from the floor. The other foot then pushes away from the floor so that both knees are straight and both feet strongly pointed for a moment; then the weight is shifted to the working foot with a *fondu*. The other foot, which is pointed a few inches from the floor, slides into the fifth position in *demi-plié*. When a *glissade* is used as an auxiliary step for small or

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big jumps, it is done with a quick movement on the upbeat. Glissades are done with or without change of feet, and all begin and end with a demi-plié. There are six glissades: devant, derrière, dessous, dessus, en avant, en arrière, the difference between them depending on the starting and finishing positions as well as the direction. Glissade may also be done sur les pointes.

K. Chasse

[*sha-SAY*]

Chased. A step in which one foot literally chases the other foot out of its position; done in a series.

L. Sous Sous

Releve to a demi-pointe in fifth position.

M. Soutenu

A turn done with the feet in sous sous, taken to change direction. Can be done at the barre or in the center.